Research Project: CSR and Accountability in Key Contexts – Forestry Management.

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Background: Forest resources represent an interesting area for business sustainability and CSR research since forestry is one of the areas in which there are numerous examples of sustainability management practices being implemented. Given the frequent use of forests for social purposes such as leisure activities, and the frequent strong links between local woodland resources and local communities in many countries and regions, forestry management is an area in which the economic, environmental and social aspects of sustainability management are often very visibly intertwined.

Aims & objectives:
- To explore the transitions involved in forestry management from a traditional economically orientated industrial approach towards more sustainability orientated management approaches;
- To understand and quantify the social, economic and environmental benefits of forestry resources and the interrelationships between particular types of benefit;
- To study the relationships between communities and their local forest and woodland resources and the opportunities to develop sustainability orientated community enterprises within them;

About the research: This research project had several district but interrelated strands including:
- Post-industrial forestry regimes: In recent years the UK has a transition from a previously dominant regime of industrial forestry, primarily concerned with the mass production of timber, to a post-industrial regime, within which timber production sits alongside a broader range of social, economic and environmental objectives. This work sought to analyse this transition to post-industrial forestry in terms of regional and local spaces rather than national policy measures.
- Forestry for People: This work was commissioned by Forest Research's Social & Economic Research Group (SERG), on behalf of Forestry Commission Scotland. The wider project undertook a comprehensive evaluation of the economic and social value of '*Forestry for People*' (F4P) in Scotland to quantify and describe the diverse social and economic benefits of forestry for the people of Scotland. It provided detailed, context-specific assessments of benefits under the themes of: Culture, Health, Education, Recreation, Amenity, Livelihoods, and Community Capacity. The research was developed using a case study methodology to draw on stakeholders' experiences of involvement in F4P activities. It involved two in-depth but contrasting case studies, one is located in the most urban part of Scotland – Glasgow, and the other in rural Scotland, centred on Loch Ness.
- Community forests and regeneration: Discussions of regeneration in relation to sustainable development have typically focussed on socio-economic issues in urban settings. This work sought to develop a more environmentally sensitive regeneration theory through in-depth study of three post-industrial coalfield areas where regeneration processes have taken the form of community forest projects. The work on community forestry also had an international comparative dimension with a study of community involvement in forest management contrasting cases drawn from Africa, Asia and Europe.

Results and outputs:
A key theme across the strands of this project was the challenging nature of forestry management and governance and the extent to which local socio-environmental conditions and relationships have a considerable impact on the viability and suitability of particular management regimes and approaches. Prospects for a successful transition to more sustainability orientated management are

improved with a greater focus on aspects of community construction and practice, evolving governance and local embeddedness.

The Forestry for People case studies revealed the depth and variety of connections that people felt for their local forest and woodland resources. Such resources were perceived as providing a wide range of benefits including: being special spaces for learning, both formally and informally; acting as spaces for new healthful activity; providing spaces for recreation, both traditional and innovative; acting as spaces which support the expression of culture; having high amenity value, particularly in terms of community pride and identity; contributing to a variety of livelihoods, including a growing sector managing the delivery of social benefits; hosting activities that provide valuable routes back to employment and social inclusion; and being valuable assets for building community capacity and social capital. For those people who got involved in forest based activities through the F4P programme they were able to learn new skills, enjoy new opportunities to socialize, improve their health and change their livelihoods in response to the opportunities presented by forest-based developments in their communities. In both places it was observable that accessing social benefits from woodland spaces brought new value to communities and prompted a revaluation of their forest spaces.

The work on community forests suggests that existing regeneration theories linked to sustainable development fit poorly with initiatives such as community forestry, and that better regeneration outcomes may be achieved through a better understanding of the relationship between nature, capital and community in regeneration processes and sustainable development applied to particular locations and communities.

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Impacts achieved/potential for impact: The Forestry for People project provided results and data that were fed directly back to Forest Research's Social & Economic Research Group and the Forestry Commission Scotland to inform their future planning for social forestry. This work could also be of interest and value to a range of community forestry and forestry-based social enterprises. The work on forestry policy and the role of forestry in regeneration activities has the potential to inform future regional regeneration planning. Prof Nick Pidgeon is also a member of Defra's Tree Health Task Force.